

**Recyclemania Outreach Partnership Team**  
EPA Region 3 - Philadelphia

**Geographic location or area of activity:** Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia

**Description of activity:** The Region 3 RecycleMania Team is enthusiastically engaged in an effort to leverage the national RecycleMania competition to increase recycling and waste minimization in the Mid-Atlantic states. By actively promoting the RecycleMania competition and offering support directly from the Regional office, WasteWise and in partnership with the State and County Recycling coordinators, this team has successfully developed a program that encourages colleges and universities to implement, reinvigorate or improve their recycling and waste minimization programs over both the short- and long-term. This team is also developing partnerships with the universities' food service providers (i.e., ARAMARK, etc.) to facilitate and encourage the increase of food waste diversion, one of the least diverted streams of municipal solid waste.

Given the rate of the growth of RecycleMania, EPA Region 3 identified the need to provide support at the local level to ensure the continuing growth of the competition. By integrating the RecycleMania outreach efforts into the existing partnership with the State counterparts, the Region has been able to increase the effectiveness of the outreach effort, while complimenting the support services that the State/Counties provides to communities. At the same time, the Region opened or established lines of communication among the college and university recycling counterparts that provide for the sharing of ideas, strategies and solutions to improve recycling and waste minimization programs. This type of information sharing is most effective and useful at the local level and EPA's involvement facilitates the exchange. Ultimately, the national program benefits since the results of increased recycling and waste minimization are captured in the cumulative efforts across the nation.

In support of the RCC MSW recycling goal, the Region 3 Recyclemania Team was successful in assisting the recruitment of 42 colleges/universities from the Mid-Atlantic states to participate in RecycleMania 2007, the most by any EPA region, including 20 colleges in PA, the most by any state. This was an increase of 150% from the Region 3 participation in 2006. During the 10-week competition the participating schools recycled a total of 4.8 million pounds, almost 4 times the amount of recyclables during the 2006 competition.

This regional effort provides the RCC program with benefits at several levels as it promotes the partnership between EPA, States and academia, provides the colleges with the opportunity to showcase and reinvigorate their recycling and waste minimization programs, involves a large number of participants (colleges students and faculty), diverts large amounts of material over a short period of time and serves as an education and outreach tool targeting a sector of the general population that is likely to incorporate recycling and waste minimization as a routine daily activity in their future private and professional lives.

This Team has been very innovative and efficient in its administration of RecycleMania: it used the talents of a volunteer post-graduate student intern to provide research and direct support for RecycleMania activities including the development of contact lists and

the preparation of a final 2007 report. To formally launch the 2007 RecycleMania school sign-up effort, the Team chose America Recycles Day 2006 as the date to issue the first of several e-mail blasts to colleges and universities. The e-mail stressed the importance of recycling and how RecycleMania could help schools achieve success in partnership with EPA and our other government partners. The success of this e-mail distribution was gauged and the Team decided to more directly contact the schools. Through the use of cold calls, visits and working through our state partners, the Team increased the rate of schools joining the 2007 RecycleMania competition. Our state partners were encouraged to at least contact their alma maters about joining RecycleMania -- even if these schools were not located in Region 3.

The RecycleMania Team is constantly interacting with representatives of the State recycling programs and regional recycling organizations, particularly those associations among colleges and universities, to identify opportunities where the Team can directly outreach to colleges and universities. In addition, the Team has been approached directly by colleges that had been planning their own environmental meetings and have helped them to coordinate with State and County recycling coordinators so that we would ensure that the best mix of local, county, state and federal participants would be engaged

**Interagency partners:** Pennsylvania DEP, Virginia DEQ, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, West Virginia DEP, Maryland Department of the Environment,

**Local partners:** Numerous Pennsylvania County Recycling Coordinators, Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania, Virginia Recycling Association, College and University Recycling Council, National Recycling Coalition and ARAMARK.

**Activity URL:** <http://www.epa.gov/reg3wcmd/solidwastemania.htm>